

DNREC continues to monitor effluent discharge from Lewes WWTTP and work with plant owner toward resuming full treatment

DOVER – The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control today continued to monitor the Lewes wastewater treatment plant's ongoing discharge of partially-treated effluent into the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal and the lower Delaware Bay due to a system malfunction at the plant that occurred Dec. 18. DNREC also continues to work with the facility and its owner, Tidewater Utilities, Inc., to help expedite the work of repairing the system currently operating on a bypass situation and restoring full treatment to the Lewes WTP's effluent discharge. The bypass operation began when membranes that normally provide a very high level of effluent treatment were contaminated during an automated backwashing process. The membranes must be replaced and other equipment repaired before the system can return to full treatment. Tidewater Utilities, Inc. has informed DNREC that new membranes have been procured and are expected to arrive at the plant by Dec. 27 for immediate installation, enabling the Lewes WWTTP to treat incoming effluent flow as normal and to discontinue bypass pumping. Until then, at DNREC's direction, Tidewater Utilities, Inc. continues to sample partially-treated effluent discharge for fecal bacteria count at locations after it leaves the plant.

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